

## ***Watson Park — Status Update***

*November 2, 2005*

In 2004, after construction for a new skate park uncovered ash and other debris from a landfill that was closed in the early 1930s, the City of San Jose hired a consultant to perform soil testing. After lead and other contaminants were found in several of the soil samples, most of Watson Park was closed in August 2005 as a precautionary measure to protect public health.

### **Soils Testing and Analysis**

- URS Corporation, an international engineering firm with offices in San Jose, has been hired by the City to conduct additional environmental and health studies that are necessary before the site can be cleaned up and restored as a park.
- The firm is experienced in this work and personnel have already been to the site. Currently they are preparing a comprehensive Work Plan that will be submitted in December to the State Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). The City is coordinating with DTSC to help ensure that all work and approvals proceed as smoothly as possible.
- In January, upon approval by DTSC, URS expects to begin detailed soil testing and analysis. An emphasis will be placed on establishing the western boundaries of the former landfill location as soon as possible this winter. The results of all the sampling will be included in a Site Characterization Study, which is scheduled to be approved by DTSC by August 2006.

### **Health Concerns**

- The environmental and health studies completed to date by Lowney Associates have indicated that there is no immediate public health risk associated with Watson Park. Nonetheless, the City and San Jose Unified School District will be partnering with the County Public Health Department to co-sponsor two or three health education sessions to provide information and answer questions. Afterwards, an optional blood lead testing program will be offered to nearby residents and frequent park users who do not have their own medical providers, if they remain concerned about their health.

### **Park Restoration**

- A park planning process will begin in December to help ensure that the community is involved while Watson Park is rebuilt. The \$347,000 originally allocated for Watson Skate Park will be held in reserve during this process.
- Although the schedule still is being refined, the current plan is to prepare and secure approval of a Remediation Action Plan by spring 2007, which will describe the best options for cleaning up the site. Park restoration could be accomplished as early as fall 2007.
- To ensure that funding is available quickly once the State approves the City's remediation plan, the City Council has reserved \$2 million for testing, park planning, design, remediation, and reconstruction. Grants and additional funding sources also will be sought.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Call 535-3570 or visit <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/watsonpark/WatsonReports.asp>